



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

What is it we love about deer? The way they look, the way they run, the way they taste? Deer may be popular to different people for different reasons but one thing is for sure. Nearly everyone gets excited when they spot one. People get even more excited if they are lucky enough to see an elk or a moose. In Michigan, we are fortunate because we have all three species here. In this issue of Nature News, we'll take a closer look at these members of the deer family. Scientists call them "cervidae."



Photo by DNR, Dave Kenyon

Sir-Vid-Ā

White-Tailed Deer



Photo by DNR, Dave Kenyon



Photo by Yasuto Sato, Okayama City, Japan. The photo was taken a half mile East of Wolf Lake in the Upper Peninsula.

You Can Call Me...

If you have ever seen a white-tailed deer leap and run through the forest, it is pretty obvious where their common name came from. But what about the elk or moose? Elk is an old European word but the Native American Shawnee tribe called them "wapiti" or "white rump." Moose also comes from a Native American term. The Algonquin tribe called this animal "Mongsua" or "twig eater." Since our ancestors had trouble pronouncing mongsua, "moose" became the common name.

Deer Out Our Ears

Deer numbers have gone up and down throughout Michigan's history.

As Michigan was settled, people moved in and cleared the land of trees to make way for farms. By 1900, people had cut too many trees for lumber and the entire state had nearly been logged off. Deer were actually scarce, nearly wiped out. But conservation efforts, better habitat, and new hunting laws all helped their comeback. Now to many deer, Michigan's landscape is the perfect buffet: corn fields, apple orchards, and young trees growing up in forest openings. Now, some

Deer Population by Zone



people think we have too many deer. They eat farmers' crops and cause lots of car accidents. Wildlife biologists are working to keep deer

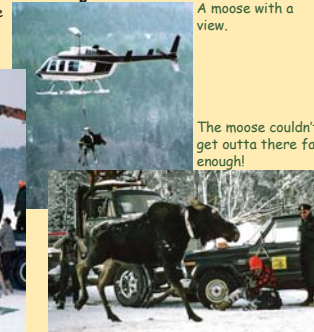
populations high but not too high. Regulated hunting seasons are the major method they use to keep deer populations from getting too high.

Operation

Moose Life

Wildlife biologists try to control wildlife populations from being too big, (like the deer) or too small. In 1985 & '87, Michigan only had a few moose so biologists captured moose in Canada and transported them to Michigan where they were released into the wild. Today moose numbers are more than 400 in the Upper Peninsula and biologists continue to study their health and populations.

Easy does it.



A moose with a view.

The moose couldn't get outta there fast enough!

Photos by DNR, Dave Kenyon